754 777 It is not the bark container known to us from Malan that is used to keep the Mekuk skulls, but rather a chamber dug under the floor of the house (Fig. 53). I saw a bark box used only once, placed on tall props reaching almost to the roof. The chest is divided into two sections by means of a dip in the bottom, and it is carefully leveled and smeared with red wood (hence, the name atum from atûm, "section, /151/ /Fig. 53 appears here in the original text/ room," which refers to the entire medicine); it is covered up by a piece of bark and a thin layer of dirt and thus remains hidden from strangers' eyes. Frequently a chest is placed over it also, or the little underground chamber is located under a bed. On the step-like raised part the medicines (b) are kept inside a circle made of plantain pieces (a); these medicines include nsü, above all, and furthermore bark scraped off the Passifloraceae [278] Ophiocaulon cissampeloides Hook f. and Adenia lobata (Jacq.) Engl. (undŏndŏle a ndžik) (1), leaves of evŭlĕme or ayŏne-beyu,

1. Also used as fish poison (see Vol. I, p. 83).

important because of the nodules in the leaves which make them look perforated like the ewu of a dead magician, and other things. Below the step the skulls (c) are set up in a semicircle so that they face the medicine.

[769] The skulls are cared for in a manner similar to the customary manner of treating the Malan skulls. Unlike the latter, they are not served food every day, but nevertheless frequently; sometimes chickens are slaughtered for them, and they are bathed in chicken blood and have chicken meat set before them.

[184] This medicine, which is unknown in the northern region (Jaunde), is quite widespread among the Fang and is the subject of many tales and stories which make all light men /Ed., men with light skin color?/ break out in a cold sweat. My boys were so excited by the [852] stories that they maintained they could not sleep if they kept thinking of these hideous Mekuk. Thus it is told, among other things, that the Mekuk walk up and down in their little room at night and make a hullabaloo or even come out of their room and thrash

821 to penetrate into houses. To be sure, this lightning is a disobedi-
775 ent fellow who has already caused his primeval mother Alonkok a great many difficulties, and he does not always heed the command of the souls. If it should happen at any time that in his willfulness he strikes the houses -- incidentally, I never heard of such a thing happening -- the natives do not assume that there was malice on the part of the souls. Possibly, as is only human, they aimed wrong. For this reason the Pangwe, who like all primitive people are quite apprehensive in other respects, are not afraid of thunder
● [152] storms. A momentary fright, however, caused by the brightness of the lightning and the violence of the thunder, can very often be observed in the case of nervous temperaments.

There is only one more question: "Why is it that the souls make use of their 'lightning rifles' only when it rains; they could surely strike down the trees just as well without it?" To this my Pangwe has a ready answer: "It doesn't work so well, because rain and storms make a passage through the air for the lightning bolt, and then the souls have an easier time of it." /198/

Rain medicines are infrequent in the Pangwe region; rain does
789 not need to be summoned for there is enough of it -- God knows --
821 in tropical West Africa. They would sooner fend it off, for instance, during the drying of ngon, at cult festivals, sometimes during the harvest, and on journeys. For this reason, unnecessary beating of drums is avoided because it invites rain, in accordance with the view, which, incidentally, also prevails outside the Pangwe region, that (rumbling) thunder is produced by rain.

During the drying of ngon, women sometimes place an inverted pot covered with leaves on the village square. Next to it they plant a little stick with a plantain dyed red speared on it,
[824] and they perhaps plant a twig of Petersia minor Niedenzu (abín) near it. The pot is supposed to represent the vessel in the sky in which the rain is enclosed (mvé, "pot," mvǒ-n̂, "rain"). Covering the pot indicates that they wish to have the heavenly pot closed in the same manner. The plantain is a plant of the moon which determines the seasons and thus also the rain, and the red coloration is, as it were, a courtesy paid to the moon. I was unable to discover the relationship of the Petersia to rain, but in the